



U.S. Department of Justice

RONALD W. SHARPE
United States Attorney
District of the Virgin Islands

Ron de Lugo Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse
5500 Veterans Drive, Suite 260
Charlotte Amalie
St. Thomas, VI 00802-6424

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United States Enters Settlement with Tramcon, Inc.
to Ensure Access for Individuals with Disabilities

St. Thomas, USVI - United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe today announced an agreement with Tramcon, Inc. that will improve access to the tramway and allow persons with disabilities to participate fully in the activities at Paradise Point.

“Individuals with disabilities must have an equal opportunity to ride the tramway, shop, eat in the restaurant and participate in the same activities offered at Paradise Point as all other persons,” Sharpe said. “We commend Tramcon, Inc. for working cooperatively with the United States Attorney’s Office on this settlement, and for welcoming persons with disabilities and their families at the tramway and Paradise Point.”

The settlement was entered to resolve a complaint filed with the U.S. Justice Department (DOJ) by a tourist who visited St. Thomas on a cruise ship and was unable to enjoy a ride on the tramway because it was not readily accessible and usable by persons with disabilities. An investigation of Tramcon’s premises conducted by the United States found 97 violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The ADA requires newly constructed facilities and altered facilities to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, and authorizes the Attorney General

to ensure that architectural barriers to accessibility are removed when such removal is readily achievable.

Under the agreement, Tramcon will take several important steps to improve access for individuals with disabilities, including: installing an elevator in the Base Station to allow disabled persons to board the tramway; installing two vertical lifts at Paradise Point to provide access from the landing platform to the two-level shopping center, bar and restaurant, and associated activities; and providing accessible ticket and retail counters, parking spaces, ramps, handrails, toilet rooms and entrance doors.

The United States Attorney's Office also has initiated compliance reviews throughout the territory of several government agencies and private businesses, including restaurants, banks and retail establishments, to improve access to all aspects of civic life for people with disabilities, including persons who are hearing and vision impaired.

"We must ensure that individuals with disabilities, whatever the disability may be, have an opportunity equal to that of non-disabled individuals to enjoy all of the goods and services offered in this community," Sharpe said.

As a result of the U.S. Attorney's initiative, ADA violations have been corrected at the Special Education Office in the Frostco Building and at the Labor Department, and elevators have been installed at the Recorder of Deeds Office and Property and Procurement Building on St. Thomas. In addition, Pueblo Supermarket agreed to ensure that persons with disabilities accompanied by service animals have access to its supermarket equal to persons without disabilities.

People interested in finding out more about the ADA or in making complaints can call the U.S. Justice Department's toll free ADA Information Line at 800-5140301 or 800-5140383 (TTY), or access

its ADA website at www.ada.gov. Complaints can also be made at the U.S. Attorney's Office at (340) 774-5757 on St. Thomas and (340) 773-3920 on St. Croix.

United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division architect Diane Perry investigated the case which was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Joycelyn Hewlett and DOJ Civil Rights Division attorney Kate Nicholson.